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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 001705

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA FOR BURNS/SATTERFIELD
NEA/SA/EX FOR AUSTIN-FERGUSON; DEPT FOR DS/IP/NEA;
DEPT FOR DS/IP/ITA; DRL FOR A/S CRANER;
NSC FOR ABRAMS/DANIN;
USAID FOR DCHA, DCHA/FPP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [CASC](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [GZ](#)

SUBJECT: THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND MARCH 19, 2004 --
(1500 HOURS LOCAL) -- IDF SOLDIERS, PALESTINIANS INJURED IN
INCURSION NEAR NETZARIM

THIS IS A JOINT MESSAGE FROM EMBASSY TEL AVIV AND CONGEN
JERUSALEM.

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) Four IDF soldiers were injured when a bomb exploded near their tank during an incursion into the Gaza Strip near Netzarim. According to UNRWA, at least four Palestinians were injured during the incursion. In the West Bank, the IDF arrested seven Palestinians and destroyed the home of a suicide bomber. End Summary.

West Bank

[1](#)2. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Death: Nil.

-- Injury: Nil.

-- Shootings: Shots were fired at IDF patrols in Tulkarm, Nablus, and Jenin on March 18. No injuries were reported.

[1](#)3. (SBU) DEMOLITIONS/ARRESTS:

-- The IDF demolished the Bethlehem home of a Fatah suicide bomber who detonated his charge in February 2002.

-- The IDF arrested seven Palestinians from across the West Bank on March 18.

GAZA

[1](#)4. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: A Palestinian injured during the March 17 IDF Rafah incursion died of his wounds on March 19.

-- Injuries: According to Israeli media reports, four IDF soldiers were lightly wounded near Netzarim by a bomb that exploded near their tank. UNRWA reported that from four to six Palestinians were injured during the incursion. (See "Incursions," below.) UNRWA reported that one Palestinian was injured by IDF gunfire in Rafah at 1000 hours March 19.
-- Mortars/Rockets/Hand Grenades: The IDF reported that a mortar shell was fired at an IDF outpost north of Rafah at approximately 2100 hours March 18. A second mortar shell was fired at an IDF outpost east of Khan Yunis at approximately 2130 hours March 18, according to the IDF. At 2135 hours an anti-tank missile was fired at an IDF APC northwest of Karni Crossing on March 17. UNRWA reported that Palestinians fired two mortar shells at Neve Dekelim at 0015 hours March 19.

-- Shootings: The IDF reported that Palestinians shot at an IDF APC northwest of Karni Crossing at approximately 1700 hours March 18. UNRWA reported that Palestinians fired at an IDF tank near Rafah at 2005 hours March 18.

-- Explosions: See "Injuries," above.

[1](#)5. (SBU) ARRESTS: According to Israel Radio, two wanted Hamas activists were arrested in the course of the incursion near Netzarim.

[1](#)6. (SBU) INCURSIONS/DEMOLITIONS: UNRWA reported that the IDF entered a village south of Netzarim at 0325 hours March [1](#)9. Israel Radio reported that the operation ended by 1200 hours that day.

[1](#)7. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS/CHECKPOINTS

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was open for Palestinians.

-- Erez Crossing was open to Palestinians. Diplomats in vehicles and internationals on foot were allowed to cross on March 19. The Erez Industrial Zone was open, with 1,392 workers entering the Zone on March 19.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed during the reporting period.

-- Karni Terminal was closed during the reporting period for the import and export of goods into the Gaza Strip.

-- Rafah Terminal was open for Palestinian travelers.

-- Tel al-Sultan checkpoint was open for people to cross out of the Gaza Strip and Toufah checkpoint was open for women, children under 12-year-old, and males over 35 years-old on March 19, according to UNRWA.

Visit Embassy Tel Aviv's Classified Website:

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

You can also access this site through the State Department's Classified SIPRNET website.

KURTZER